A TRUE

TESTIMONY

CONCERNING

Oaths & Swearing, &c.

AS ALSO,

An Answer to the subject matter contained in *Twelve Arguments* or *Reasons* (laid down in a Sermon preached at *Carliste*, Aug. 17. 1664. by *Allan Smalwood*, D.D. as he stiles himself) to prove, That our Saviour did not forbid all Swearing.

Wherein is fully cleared,

The Command of Christ and his Apostle *James*, *Swear not at all*, Matth. 5, 34. & *Jam.* 5. 12. from the corrupt glosses, limited sence and meanings of the said *A. S.* in his said Sermon; and in his Reply to *F. H.* his Book, called, *Oaths no Gospel Ordinance, &c.*

And also,

The unsatisfactorines and unsoundnes of the aforesaid Arguments, fully discovered; and the Command of Christ, *Swear not at all*, manifested, to be an universal prohibition of all Oaths and Swearing whatsoever, to his Disciples.

Written in the year 1668. By *Ger. Benson.*

Psal. 89. 49, 50. *Remember (O Lord) the rebuke thy servants have, wherewith thine enemies have blasphemed thee, and slandered the footsteps of thine anointed.*

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BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

To the READER.

READER,

WHat I have written in this little Treatise (not being after man, neither by me received of man nor from man) I have therefore made no use of the inticing words of mans wisdom, neither of any mans testimony, for the confirming the same; but as the testimony therein born is for God, & the truth of his sayings, & not for man, I have made use of no other witness than the Scriptures of truth, which proceeded from the spirit that beareth witness, because the spirit is truth; and being so can neither deceive nor be deceived; which spirit being of God, is greater than man, and so knoweth more: For the things therein treated of, are matters of faith, & there-

fore ſtands not in the wiſdom of words or of men, but in the power of God, *who ſhuts & no man can open; & opens & no man can ſhut. Neither indeed is fallen man, eſpecially a ſwearer, a competent witneſs in this controverſie about ſwearing, no man being a competent witneſs in his own cauſe. Read then without prejudice, own with underſtanding, or anſwer in the ground, without contending about words to no profit; For the Kingdom of* God *conſiſteth not in words but in power, neither in meat & drink, but righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

A true TESTIMONY, *concerning Oathes and Swearing, &c.*

IN the day that Almighty God created Man (before man was) in his Image and according to his own likeneſs, created he him, male and female created he them; and having finiſhed the works of Creation, he looked upon all that he had made, and lo it was very good: And having alſo made the Man of the Duſt of the Earth, He planted a Garden Eaſtward in *Eden*, where he put the Man whom he had made: And that Man might learn Obedience, the Lord commanded him, ſaying; *Thou ſhalt eat freely of every Tree of the Garden; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt die the death.* Now in that day, there was no ſtrife or controverſie; for what the Lord commanded it was done, as it's written, *Pſal.* 33. 9. *For he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt.* And God was all in all, and over all, the Law-giver, Judge, and King. And as then there was no ſin in the World which God had made; ſo neither was there any controverſie or ſtrife betwixt Man and his Maker, or amongſt the Creatures of God, neither was there any Oath or Swearing, nor any other outward or viſible Sign, Shadow, Type, or Figure, in or by which the Lord was to be worſhipped, nor any need thereof; for the Lord God who is the ſubſtance of all, was all in all, and over all, God bleſſed for ever; who was worſhipped not in words, but in deeds; not with Oaths and Swearing, neither in ſet Forms, Shadows, Signs, or Figures; but in Spirit and Truth, in Love and true Obedience, which was and is better than Sacrifice, or the fat of Rams: And in that day the Law of the Spirit which is Eternal (and not Moral) was the rule and guide of Man in his Worſhip and Service of God, with whom Man in his Spirit had unity and fellowſhip, in the Light, Life and Truth that is eternal and unchangeable. And as it was in the beginning, even ſo it is and ſhall be in the day of reſtauration of all things by Jeſus Chriſt,

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who is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty; *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last, the true and faithful Witness, the Author of all true witness-bearing. But Man being in honour, continued not; for the Serpent being more subtile than any Beast of the field, deceived the Woman with his limitted sence and meaning, which he then gave to the positive Word and Command of God (even as the spirit that now ruleth in all the Chileren of disobedience, with his limitted sense and commodious interpretations (as they are called) of the Scriptures of Truth, doth deceive the simple that lends an ear unto him) and thereby brought her then (as that spirit doth people now) into the transgression of the Word and Command of God, unto which no man ought to add any thing, neither to diminish ought therefrom, *Deut.* 4. 2. *Rev.* 22. 18, 19. *And the Woman having eaten of that which* in its self *was good* (and therefore *not intrinsically evil*, mark that) *gave unto her Husband with her, and he did eate*; who having eaten contrary to the Word and Command of God, sin entered into the world, and the world into mans heart, and death by sin, the first ground or cause of unbelief: And now in that day (the Candle of the wicked being put out) Death and Darkness passed over the Life and Truth of God in Man; so that the Word and Truth of God (the ground of true witness-bearing) which was and is Eternal (not Moral) was hid from their eyes who had sinned; And now Man being deprived of the Glory of God, and ignorant of his Righteousness, went after his own Inventions, so that as it is written, *Death reigned from* Adam *until* Moses, *Rom.* 5. 14. And now in that day the Lord had a Controversie with Man by reason of his sin: and Man in his sin, was in unbelief of the Word and Truth of God, the ground of true witness-bearing. Insomuch, as that in process of time, when Men began to be multiplied upon Earth, the wickedness of Men waxed great, so that they went into strife and contention one against another, until blood touched blood: And in this estate of Man, *Abimelech* King of *Gerar*, who was in the unbelief of the Word and Power of God, and observing that God was with *Abram*, he was afraid, as it is written, *The workers of Iniquity are afraid, where no fear or cause thereof is*, Psal. 53. 4 5. and having a controversie against *Abram* concerning *Sarah*, Gen. 20. 9. said unto *Abram*, *Swear unto me here*

here by God, *That thou wilt not hurt me, nor my Children*; Then *Abram* (being afraid of his life, *Gen.* 12. 12. and also having a controversie at that time with *Abimelech*, about a Well of water, *Gen.* 21. 22,23,24,25.) said, *I will Swear*. And here was the first Oath or Swearing that is recorded in the Scriptures of Truth, together with the original ground or cause thereof, *viz.* Unbelief the fruit of sin; and this was in time before the Lord is said to have sworn, and long before the Law was given: under which an Oath for confirmation was to be unto them (that were under that Law) an end of all strife, *Heb.* 6. 16. And an Oath and Swearing was also in long time after Witness-bearing; for we read, That *Eve* before the Fall, did bear witness concerning what the Lord had said, *Gen.* 3. 2,3. And *Sarah* after the Fall (and in time before any Oath or Swearing) did call the Lord to witness, or judge betwixt her and *Abram*, Gen. 16. 5. without any Oath or Swearing. So that witness-bearing was in the beginning before the Fall, and so in time, long before any oath or swearing was in the world. Afterwards the Lord proved *Abram*, who obeying the Word or Command of God, The Lord made a Promise unto *Abram*, *That in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed*; and to shew to him, and his seed, the immutability of his Counsel, and to the end, that he and they might have strong consolation; The Lord by way of condescention to Man in his weakness (which by reason of transgression all men by nature were involved in) gave a token, as he had done to *Noah*, Gen. 9. 12. and said, *By my Self have I sworn, because thou hast not spared thine only son; therefore will I surely bless thee, and multiply thy Seed, and in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*: And so the Lord added word to word, thereby to regain, or beget man into the belief of the truth of his Word and Promise; and that by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lye; man might have full assurance, that what the Lord had promised he would perform: yet notwithstanding, they believed not his Word, neither put their trust in his help (whom he had chosen out of the Nations, to place his Name among, and to be a peculiar People to himself) therefore their dayes he consumed in vanity, and their years in trouble, yet he helped them for his Name-sake, and made his Power known in their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and leading

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them through the Deep, and in the Wilderneſs, and yet they ſinned ſtill againſt him, and provoked the Higheſt in the wilderneſs, and tempted God in their hearts; Wherefore the Lord, becauſe of their tranſgreſſion, and that ſin by the commandment might become exceeding ſinful, and that the offence might abound, *Rom.* 5. 20. added the Law, called, The firſt Covenant or Teſtament, *Gal.* 3.19. until the Seed ſhould come, which was out of tranſgreſſion (mark) to whom the Promiſe was made, which Seed is Chriſt, *Gal.* 3.16. who being come, the true and faithful Witneſs, the Oath and Promiſe of God made to *Abraham* was fulfilled and performed in him, *Luke* 1. 72, 73. whom God had appointed to finiſh the tranſgreſſions, and to ſeal up the ſins (that were under the firſt Covenant which was not faultleſs, *Heb.* 8. 7. for the Law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did, *Heb.* 7. 19.) and to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs, *Dan.* 9.24. that they which are called, might receive the eternal Inheritance. So Chriſt being come, in whom all the Promiſes of God are *Yea* and *Amen* for ever; he was the end of the Law (which was added becauſe of tranſgreſſion, until he came that was out of tranſgreſſion) for Righteouſneſs to all that believe, by whoſe obedience, many were, are, and ſhall be made Righteous through Faith. But the Law is not of Faith, *Gal.* 3. 12. neither was given for a righteous man (mark that) but to the lawleſs and diſobedient, 1 *Tim.* 1.9,10. And therefore what the Law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under it, *viz.* to the tranſgreſſors and diſobedient, *&c.* But Chriſtians in Chriſt Jeſus, and in the Faith of him, are new Creatures, and therefore are not under the Law of a carnal Commandment, which was peculiar to the *Jewes*, but under the Law of the Spirit, and of Faith, the power of an endleſs life, *Heb.* 7. 16. And as the Law was not given for a righteous man, ſo neither was it given to the *Gentiles*: For God ſhewed his Word unto *Jacob*, his Statutes and his Judgments unto *Iſrael*; He dealt not ſo with every Nation, neither had the Heathen knowledge of his Laws, *Pſal.* 147.19,20. And therefore as *Allan Swalwood* ſaith of the Judicial Laws, as he calls them; I may ſay of the whole Law, written (whether by Men called Moral, Judicial or Ceremonial) that it was never obligatory to the *Gentiles*, neither to us, who by nature are no *Jewes*, nor ever dwelt in *Canaan*; And ſo what was

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never impoſed, need not to be aboliſhed as to the *Gentiles*, neither to us; but Swearing was never commanded by God unto the *Gentiles* as any part of his Worſhip and Service, therefore as to them and us, who by Nature are no *Jewes*, nor ever dwelt in *Canaan*, it was never Obligatory. So that *A. S.* and all that plead for Oaths and Swearing, with all their Arguments drawn from the authority of that which they call the Moral Law, are overthrown, and will not avail them, to prove the lawfulneſs of Swearing amongſt us of theſe Iſlands, who by Nature have deſcended from the *Gentiles* and not from the *Jewes*: And therefore *A. S.* is worthy of blame, in going about to lay a yoke (which neither the Fathers nor we were able to bear) upon them, which from among the *Gentiles* are turned unto God, and are become Chriſtians in Chriſt Jeſus, which the Lord never required nor laid upon them, *Acts* 15.10. For what the Lord required of the *Gentiles* was manifeſt in them, for God himſelf ſhewed it unto them, *Rom.* 1.19. So that they alſo who amongſt the *Gentiles* were unfaithful to, and in that which they knew of God, were likewiſe left without excuſe, as it is written, *As many as have ſinned without the Law, ſhall periſh without the Law; and as many as have ſinned in the Law ſhall be judged by the Law*, Rom. 2. 12. And as to the *Jewes*, to whom the Law was peculiarly given, and ſo were under it, and therefore what the Law ſaid, it was to them that were under it; *When the fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, that he might redeem them that were under the Law, that they might receive the adoption of ſons*, Gal. 4. 4. That ſo both *Jewes* and *Gentiles*, without reſpect of perſons, might receive in Chriſt the bleſſing promiſed to *Abram* (when he was in uncircumciſion) through the righteouſneſs of Faith, and not through the Law which is not of Faith, *Gal.* 3. 12. And ſo as its written, *The Promiſe is ſure to all the ſeed, and not to that only which is of the Law; but alſo to that which is of the Faith of* Abraham, *Rom.* 4.16. although they were never under the Law of any carnal commandment, nor never dwelt in *Canaan*: For all who are of Chriſt, they are *Abrahams* ſeed, and heirs according to promiſe, *Gal.* 3.29. And ſo he is our peace, who hath made both Jew and Gentile one, and hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition betwixt them, having aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity, the

Law of Commandments, contained in the Law written, That ſo both Jew and Gentile, through him, might have acceſs unto the Father by one Spirit (and not by Swearing, or obſerving any carnal Commandment) and might worſhip the Father who is a Spirit, not in the oldneſs of the letter, but in the newneſs of the Spirit, the Law and Power of the endleſs Life (which was in the beginning with God, before any Oath or Swearing was) from which Word and Power of God that is Eternal (not Moral) Man departed when he ſinned; And as Chriſt is our Peace, he is alſo our Peace-maker, by taking away ſin, and finiſhing tranſgreſſion, the ground or cauſe of the Controverſie betwixt God and Man, and one man with another, and bringing into the Heart everlaſting Righteouſneſs, he reconcileth man unto God, and one man unto another, turning the hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the diſobedient, to the wiſdom of the Juſt. And Chriſt Jeſus coming to do the will of God, he fulfilled the Law, which could not in any wiſe paſs away till it was fulfilled, *Mat.* 5. 18. and having fulfilled the Law (not deſtroyed it) as he that fulfills and performs his Covenant in every particular, he doth not deſtroy it; although the Covenant once fulfilled, is no longer obligatory to him that hath fulfilled it) according to the will of God who gave the Law, he took it away, or out of the way, and diſanulled the firſt Covenant or Teſtament written in Tables of Stone, that he might eſtabliſh the ſecond, *Heb.* 10. 9. called the new Covenant, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God; not in Tables of Stone, but in fleſhy Tables of the Heart, according to 2 *Cor.* 3. *Heb.* 8. 10. & 10. 16. And in that he ſaith a new Covenant, he hath abrogated the old Covenant or Teſtament, *Heb.* 8. 13. For being Teſtaments, they were not to be of force both together, the latter being in its ſelf a revocation of the former; and where a Teſtament is revoked, there every Legacy or Gift therein contained, is alſo revoked and taken away, and not ſome particulars only, but the whole; which Teſtament, or Covenant, is eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes, That ſo *what was impoſſible for the Law or firſt Teſtament to do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh and for ſin, condemned ſin in the fleſh, that the righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh but after the Spirit,* Rom. 8, 2, 3.

Rom. 8. 2, 3. And thus Christ Jesus, according to the will of God, having fulfilled the Law (not destroyed it) which was not of Faith, and therefore was not to abide for ever: And the end of God in giving the Law (which was but to continue for a time, as a School-master to bring to Christ) being accomplished in Christ, he took away the Law or first Testament (that made nothing perfect, *Heb.* 7. 19.) which was not of Faith, being changeable; and in the stead or place thereof, he established the second Testament or new Covenant, upon better promises, which perfecteth for ever them that are Sanctified, according to *Heb.* 10. 9. which being the Law of Faith, is unchangable and abideth for ever: So that Christ Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, the faithful dispenser of the manifold Graces of God, unto all that believe, came not only to reform the abuses of the Scribes and Pharisees, in Swearing, in the Temple, in the first Priesthood, and other things under the first Covenant; but also to take away the things that were changeable which they had so abused; and in the stead and place of them, to establish that which is unchangeable, the New Testament, upon better promises, *Heb.* 8. 6. And in that he saith a New Testament, he hath abrogated the Old, *Heb.* 8. 13. And therefore when Christ Jesus (the true and faithful Witness was come, who was to restore all things as in the beginning) was set down on the Mountain, and his Disciples (whom he had chosen out of the World to be his Witnesses) came to him, and he being to make known unto them that were to bear witness of him, the true Witness-bearing, as it was in the beginning, before any Oath or Swearing was; amongst other his gracious words, he said unto them (who were of the Jews, and then were come to be his Disciples) and not to the multitude, *Ye are the Salt of the Earth, ye are the Light of the World; let your Light so shine before men, that they seeing your good Works, may glorifie your heavenly Father.* And that they being Jews, might not be offended at what he was to say unto them; He told them, *He was not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil them:* And *that not one jot or tittle should pass from the Law, till it should be fulfilled* (mark that.) In which words is plainly shewed, That as the Law was fulfilled by Christ, it was to pass away, being only given by God, and added because of transgression for a time, *viz.* till the Seed should come, that

was out of tranſgreſſion, and ſo the Law being temporary, was changable: And having ſo prepared their minds, he told them among other Precepts in the Law, *That it had been ſaid of old time, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf, but ſhalt perform thine Oaths to the Lord: But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all; neither by Heaven, for it is the Throne of God; neither by the Earth*, &c. *but let your yea be yea; nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of evil*, Mat.5.34, *&c.* By which words, (which are the interpreters of the heart) it is evident that the Oaths which they were under the Law to perform unto the Lord, and which Chriſts words had reference unto, were ſuch Oaths as were required by the Law; and thoſe Oaths the Law required, were by the Lord, and not by the Creatures; for all ſwearing by the Creatures was by the Law forbidden: Which being ſo, then the words following, *But I ſay unto you*, (who were to be Lights of the World) *Swear not at all*, muſt needs be a prohibition of all Swearing by the Lord. And that he added, *Neither by Heaven*, &c. Chriſt giveth a reaſon for the ſame, *Mat.*23.22. where he ſaith, *He that ſweareth by Heaven, he ſweareth by the Throne of God, and by Him that ſitteth thereon*; who is the Lord: And therefore as they were not to ſwear by the Lord, ſo neither might they ſwear by Heaven, it being Gods Throne, which would amount to ſwearing by God, that ſitteth thereon: *Neither by the Earth, neither by Jeruſalem, neither by the Head*; which being the greateſt of the Creatures, the prohibition includeth alſo the leſſer.

Therefore it is evident *(none of Chriſts words being ſpoken in vain)* That Chriſt Jeſus did not onely forbid all ſwearing by the Creatures, but alſo by the true God: For if there had been any exception intended by Chriſt the Wiſdom of God, he doubtleſs would have mentioned it, as well as he did verſ.32. where it's ſaid, *Whoſoever ſhall put away his Wife, except it be for fornication, cauſeth her to commit adultery*, &c. For an Oath and Swearing not being in the beginning with God, nor originally of him, (as true witneſs-bearing was) but being added (becauſe the true witneſs-bearing was tranſgreſſed) for a time, *viz.* until Chriſt Jeſus the true and faithful Witneſs, and ground of all true witneſs-bearing, was made manifeſt, to reſtore the true witneſs-bearing, as it was at the firſt. Now Chriſt being come, and having choſen his Diſciples out of the world

world to be his Witneſſes, and to place and reſtore the true witneſs-bearing unto and amongſt them, whom he had appointed to be Lights and good Examples unto the World; he therefore took away Swearing, which was not of Faith, but was added becauſe of tranſgreſſion, as before is ſaid, and as being more than Yea and Nay; that he might reſtore and place the true witneſs-bearing, which is of Faith, and therefore to abide in the Houſe, and among the Houſhold of God for ever. For it is evident from the words of Chriſt, (where he ſaith, *Let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of evil*) that ſwearing being more than yea and nay, the original ground or cauſe thereof in man, came of the evil, and not of the good, in man. And thus Chriſt Jeſus, having forbidden all ſwearing whatſoever, as aforeſaid, and taken away the firſt ground or cauſe thereof, in his Diſciples, he according to the will and promiſe of God, in the place and ſtead thereof, reſtored the pure Language, the Word of Faith, which is the Word of Truth that was in the beginning; by the Light of which, every one that believeth with his Heart, cometh to know the Truth, and ſo to do the Truth, to confeſs and ſpeak the Truth from his Heart unto his Neighbour, or before a Magiſtrate in witneſs-bearing. And this Witneſs, being of God, will not lye, and is therefore the greater Witneſs, which every one that believeth hath in himſelf, according to 1 *Joh.* 5. 9, 10. And the Teſtimony that is born from this, and according to this word of Truth in the heart in witneſs-bearing, is in Truth, in Righteouſneſs, and in Judgement, being from and according to a good underſtanding. And as the Truth (which is in Chriſt, the Wiſdom and Power of God) in mans heart, is believed in, it doth purifie and make clean the heart, by taking away ſin and unbelief out of the heart, and ſo reconcileth it unto God, and one man unto another: And now the Teſtimony that is born according to the truth in the heart, is that which God hath appointed to end all Controverſie and Strife amongſt men; for now it is the Spirit that beareth witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is Truth, 1 *John* 5. 6. And it is the Spirit of Truth which leads into all Truth, and ſo from all Oaths, Shadows, and Swearing, in witneſs-bearing; which having but a ſhadow, and not the ſubſtance of true witneſs-bearing, when the ſubſtance was come, the ſhadows were to paſs away: So what

Chriſt

Christ Jesus received of his Father, that he made known to his Disciples, as he said, *Joh.*17.8. *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou hast sent me.* Insomuch as the Apostle *James*, when he writ his Epistle to the Tribes which were scattered abroad, he put them in mind, being Jews, not Gentiles, of that Precept of Christ, where he saith, *Above all things, my Brethren, swear not*, &c. *Jam.* 5.12. Not that Swearing was a greater offence than Murder or Adultery: But they, being Jews (and not Gentiles) by nature, had a Command from God under the Law to swear, *&c.* were apt to think they might as well swear then, as they might before. (Not at that time being so fully informed that *Christ Jesus was the end of the Law for Righteousness to them that believe in him; and that by him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses*, Act.13.39.) For many among the Jews which then believed, were at that time zealous of the Law of *Moses*; insomuch as there were of them, that taught the Brethren, *That except they were circumcised, and kept the Law of Moses, they could not be saved*, Act.15. & 21.20. So that although Adultery and Murder were as great sins as Swearing, yet the Law (which they were zealous of) having forbidden the one, and required the other, it was more difficult to bring them off from Swearing, than from Murder or Adultery. And therefore as it's usual amongst men, to exhort those they are to watch over, above all things to take heed of those evils they have been most addicted to, and of those things they have been trained up in; even so the Apostle exhorted them, being Jews, to remember the Command of Christ in whom they believed, *Swear not at all*, &c. And although it be now concluded that Christ Jesus did intend by those words, *Swear not at all*, an absolute, universal, and unlimited prohibition of all manner of Swearing whatsoever, (as indeed it must be either all Swearing that was formerly commanded, or else Christ in that Command forbad nothing which was not forbidden before; nay, by those words, *Swear not at all*, he made the case about Swearing more questionable, dark, and doubtful, than it was before; which for any to affirm, were a great injury to Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God. And yet Christ Jesus, in forbidding all manner

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of Swearing whatſoever, did nothing but according to the will of his heavenly Father: Nor did the Apoſtle *James*, in putting the Jews in mind of his Maſters Command, *Swear not at all*, any thing in oppoſition, but in obedience to the requiring of Chriſt.

And now of the things before written, this is the ſum, That an Oath and Swearing was not in the beginning with God, neither was the original ground or cauſe of an Oath & Swearing, of God. And therefore neither was nor is an Oath or Swearing, any part of the Law eternal, nor of the eſſence of the worſhip and ſervice of God, in Spirit and Truth. But the original ground or cauſe of an Oath and Swearing amongſt men in the World, was the Unbelief of Man, (in God, his Word, and Truth) of which, Tranſgreſſion was the firſt ground or cauſe, which not being any fruit of the Spirit of God, (as true witneſs-bearing is) entred into the World, and the World into Mans heart, by ſin and death. And therefore an Oath and Swearing is not any part of the worſhip and ſervice of God now, under the Spirits immediate Adminiſtration. And the Law, having but a ſhadow of good things then to come, therefore could never make the Comers thereunto perfect, as the bringing in of a better Hope doth: And ſo Chriſt Jeſus the true and faithful Witneſs, that ends the Controverſie between God and Man, being the End of the Law, (under which the Oath for confirmation was to be unto them that were under it, an end of all controverſie and ſtrife amongſt men) for Righteouſneſs, to all that believe; which Law, not being of Faith, was to be taken away, or out of the way, when Faith was come; which was before the Law (which is not of faith) was given, or any Oath or Swearing was. For as the Love of God to *Iſrael* appeared, in giving them his Laws and Statutes, notwithſtanding they could not accompliſh their eternal Peace and Happineſs, by reaſon of the weakneſs of the fleſh; neither could be taken away, nor they freed therefrom, until they were fulfilled, and the end accompliſhed for which they were given; Even ſo the Riches of the Love of God appeared in ſending forth his Son (to effect that which the Law could not do for man, neither could man free himſelf from) who being manifeſted in the fleſh, the Oath and Covenant of God was fulfilled in him: And to as many as received, and do receive him, by believing in his Word, which is nigh in

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the heart, to do thereafter, the heart cometh to be purified, and made clean, and being prepared by the Lord, cometh to witness and feel the Love and Power of God, to quicken it, and enable it to every good work: So that *a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things*, Mat. 12. 35. speaking the Truth to, and witnessing the Truth for his Neighbour, according to and from a good understanding. And thus the righteousness of the Law cometh to be fulfilled by Christ in us, who walk not according to the Flesh, but according to the Spirit; and the end of God in giving the Law accomplished; according as it's written, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. *The end of the Law is love out of a pure heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfained*: So that the Law which required an Oath in witness-bearing, nor any other part of the Law, by Christ, or any that are of him, is not frustrated, neither destroyed, but the righteousness of the Law by true witness-bearing, is fulfilled: And being fulfilled, was by Christ, according to the will of God, disanulled, abrogated, abolished, and taken out of the way, with all Oaths, Swearing, and Signs, that were required by it: And in the stead and place thereof, the Law of the Spirit and of Faith, the true witness-bearing, as it was in the beginning, before any Oath or *Swearing* was, established by Christ in the House of God for ever. By which Law of Faith, the Victory over the World, *Sin*, and Unbelief, cometh to be witnessed, the first ground or cause of *Swearing* in the World. And now the Righteousness of God (without the Law written, which is not of Faith) is manifested (by the Light of Christ that shineth in mans heart, for to give unto man the knowledge of the things that are immediate of the Spirit, and therefore are spiritual, *not moral*) being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, according to *Rom.* 3. 21. And is not now called the Works of the Law, but the Fruits of the Spirit; which, as the Apostle saith, *Ephes.* 5. 9. is in all Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth: And *Gal.* 5. 22, 23. is *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*, &c. And so the Cause being removed, the Effect ceaseth. From all which it is evident, That true Witness-bearing was before any Oath or Swearing was: And the Law that is Perfect and Eternal, was (though hid from their Eyes whose Minds were alienated from the Life and Light of God, because of the hardness of their Hearts)

Hearts) before the Law in the Tables of Stone, was written: And the Lord was worſhipped in Spirit and Truth, before any Oath or Swearing was: And therefore an Oath and Swearing neither is, nor ever was, any part of the Law eternal, nor of Faith, neither any eſſential part of the Worſhip of God in Spirit and Truth, which is unchangable and ſpiritual: So that the laying aſide, or taking away of an Oath and Swearing in witneſs-bearing, is not to deſtroy witneſs-bearing, but the reducing it to its Original Verity and Purity, as it was in the beginning, from all Oaths and Swearing; which was added for a time, to wit, till the true Witneſs Chriſt Jeſus, and the true witneſs-bearing, was made manifeſt and reſtored, according to the Propheſies that were written of and concerning Chriſt: And as true witneſs-bearing was in time, before any Oath or Swearing was, (and therefore an Oath and Swearing was not, neither is, of the eſſence and ſubſtance of true witneſs-bearing) even ſo the Truth was before any Lye; although the Lyar is more ancient than the Swearer.

Now theſe things being ſo, why ſhould men profeſſing God and Godlineſs, and Chriſtianity, go about to continue an Oath and Swearing in witneſs-bearing under the Goſpel, which is everlaſting, and was preached to *Abraham* before the Law of Oaths was, or any Swearing was commanded or required by God, *Gal.* 3. 8. which had its beginning and ending in time, not being of the Law of Faith, that abideth for ever; and therefore was and is changable, being of thoſe things that might be ſhaken, and ſo to be removed: That true witneſs-bearing (which being of Faith, and therefore cannot be ſhaken) may remain.

Therefore, O ye called Chriſtians, let it not ſeem to you a thing ſo grievous, to have the Bondwoman (*Unbelief*) and her Son (*Swearing*) caſt out; for aſſuredly it muſt not inherit the Kingdom of God with the Son of the Freewoman, (*True Witneſs-bearing.*)

And now theſe things thus premiſed, being a true Teſtimony concerning Oaths and Swearing, *&c.* I proceed to anſwer the ſubject matter contained and laid down in Twelve Arguments or Reaſons, whereby *Allan Smallwood* hath endeavoured to prove (but in vain) that our Saviour did not forbid all Swearing, when he ſaid unto his Diſciples, *Swear not at all*, &c. Mat. 5. 34.

Arg. I.

The first Argument (as it is stated by *A. S.* in his Reply to *F. H.* his Book intituled, *Oaths no Gospel Ordinance*, &c.) is,

That the Father and the Son are one and the same God immutable in Nature and Will, (for mutability would argue imperfection) and consequently cannot issue forth contrary Commands, for that would evidence a contrariety or mutability in their Will: And the Father having commanded Swearing, the Son surely hath not forbidden it.

The Argument runs thus;

Whatever the Father hath commanded, that the Son hath not forbidden:

But the Father hath commanded Swearing, Deut. 6. 13.

Therefore the Son hath not forbidden it.

Answer.

And in the first place, I say, the Argument in this Case is not fairly stated.

Secondly, That there is a difference between the Law of God which was and is eternal, and so unchangable, as the Will of God in it self is; and the Commands of God under the Law, which was given to the People of *Israel* for a time onely, and so were temporary, to wit, till the Seed came to whom the promise was made, *Gal.* 3 19. to be a Schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith, *Gal.* 3. 24. But after that faith was come, they were no longer (by Gods ordination) to be under the Schoolmaster, *vers.* 25. So that when Christ the Seed, to whom the promise was made, was come, & had fulfilled all that was written concerning him in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, the Law of Commandments that was not of faith, *Gal.* 3. 12. was to be taken out of the way, the end for which it was given being accomplished, according to the will of God. So that although God the Father commanded Swearing under the Law, till Christ the true and faithful Witness was made manifest in the flesh, and restored the true Witness-bearing, as it was in the beginning before Swearing was, unto his Disciples, whom he had chosen out of the World to be his Witnesses; and that Christ Jesus the Son of God

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in that Precept, *Swear not at all*, did forbid all Swearing to his Disciples; yet there neither was, nor is any mutability or change in the Will of God, nor contrariety in the Will of the Son, to the Will of his Father; for what the Son did command, it was according to the Will of, and what he received of his Father: Now that Swearing was commanded by the Law *A.S.* confesseth; And that an Oath and Swearing was to pass away, or to be taken out of the way when the true Witness and Witness-bearing (was made manifest) which was before any Oath or Swearing was, is before fully manifested: So that the Argument in this case truly stated, runs thus; *That what God the Father did command to his People* Israel *only for a time, and for such an end; the time being fully come, and the end accomplished, the Command so given, is no longer of force, nor obligatory.* And therefore, there is in this case, no contrariety or mutability in the Will of the Father, nor contrariety in the Will of the Son of God, to the Will of his Father, in that Command, *Swear not at all:* That Command of God the Father, *Deut.*6.13. which was temporary, being according to the Will of God, first taken out of the way, That the Command of Christ, *Mat.*5.34. might be established for ever, according to *Heb.*10.9. *He taketh away the first, that he might establish the second.* And the Prophesie, *Psal.*108. Judah *is my Law-giver.* That so the servant, who was not by God's appointment to abide in the house for ever, might give place to the Son, who is to abide in the house for ever: And that God the Father did give several Commands only to be observed and to continue for a time without any mutability in his Will, is evident from the testimony of the Scriptures of Truth; As *Gen.*22.2. where the Lord commanded *Abram* to take his only son *Isaac* and offer him for a burnt offering, *&c.* And in *vers.*12. the Lord commanded him not to lay his hand upon the Child, neither do any thing unto him: And *Mat.*2.13. *Joseph* was commanded, *to take the Babe, and his Mother, and flee into Egypt, and be there till* (mark) *I bring thee word, &c.* And in *vers.*19. *When* Herod *was dead,* he was commanded *to take the Babe and his Mother, and go into the Land of* Israel: And yet there was no change or contrariety in the Will of God, although there was several and contrary Commands, the one, *To flee into Egypt*; and

the other, *To return into the Land of Israel:* So likewise, *Gal.* 4. 1, 2, *&c.* it's said, *That the Heir, as long as he is a Child, differeth nothing from a Servant, though he be Lord of all; but is under Tutors and Governors, until the time appointed of the Father.* By which it is evident, That though *Israel* according to the Will of God was to be under the Law, which was not of Faith, for a time as a servant; yet it was never the Will of God their condition should alwayes be so, but only until the time appointed: which time being come, they were to be freed from that Law, *that they might receive the adoption of sons:* For although the Lord had forbidden *Moses*, and all others, to add any thing to, or diminish any thing from what was written in the Law; yet He had not limitted himself but that he might add to, or take from what he had given in command, and that without any mutability in his Will: And if the Father at sundry times did give forth several Commands, and that contrary one to another, without any mutability in his Will (in that sense which *A. S.* doth affirm) Then the Son, who doth whatsoever he seeth the Father do; did not give forth that Command, *Swear not at all*, contrary to, but in obedience to the Will of his Father: For although the words of the Commands, *Mat.* 5.34. and *Deut.*6.13. in themselves are contrary, yet the Will of the Father, and the Son, was in perfect unity, without any contrariety: But the contrariety is in that mind that is Carnal, and therefore neither is, nor can be subject to the Law of God, *Rom.* 8.7. which being in the Spirit, is Spiritual and Eternal, and not Moral.

So that such now whose minds are alienated from the Light and Life of God, are ignorant of the Righteousness of God, as the Jews formerly were, who had *Moses* read in their Synagogues every Sabbath day (for where *Moses* is read, the vail is upon the heart to this day, 2 *Cor.* 3.15.) so that such do not see now, no more than the Jews did then, the end of that which is abolished: Nevertheless now as then, all whose minds are turned to the Lord, and believe in his Light that shines in their hearts for to give unto them the Knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and of the Law in the Spirit, written not in tables of stone, but in the heart; which Law was before the Law of *Moses*

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was written, or any vail was. They in the Light Eternal see the end of the Law, which was not of Faith; and the Law abolished, under which an Oath for confirmation was to be unto them that were under it, an end of all controversie and strife: And also in the Light that was before any Oath or Swearing was, they see and know the true and faithful Witness, Christ Jesus in them, from whom all true Witness-bearing is; and so the true Witness-bearing, as it was in the beginning, which no Vail, Shadow, or natural Light can discern, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. And thus all who do the Will of God by believing in him whom God hath sent, they come to know Christs Doctrine, *Swear not at all*, to be his that sent him, *to be a Light to the Gentiles, and the Glory to his People Israel.* And is it equal, O ye sons of men, That those whose eyes God hath opened, and unto whom God hath given the Light of Eternal Life, that they should be compelled to walk by the same guide, the blind are led by, in their witness-bearing? Would it not be a thing unreasonable, for to require him who hath his perfect sight, when the Sun shines to shew him his way, to require him to have a man take him by the hand and lead him on his way, as the natural blind are led? Hath not the Lord in all Ages put a difference betwixt them that feared his Name, and trembled at his Word, and those that feared him not, but walked after the stubbornness of their own hearts, and after their own inventions? And if the Lord hath so done, and so doth, ought not all those who are his Ministers upon Earth, to do the like?

But *A. S.* further saith, *That Oaths are commanded by the Moral Law, and that the Ten Commandments are the summary of it:* And doth grant, *That Oaths are no Gospel Ordinance.* And also saith, *That our Saviour came not to destroy, but fulfil the Moral Law; And therefore Swearing, being enjoyned by the Moral Law, must be now of as much force as ever it was.* He also affirmeth, *That Christ did not abolish the Judicial and Ceremonial Law, once commanded by God; because the one was peculiarly given to the Jews, and so concerns us not at all: And the other was temporary, expiring at Christ's Death, &c.*

Answ. The words, *Law*, *Covenant*, and *Testament*, are general and comprehensive words; every of them including or comprehending

prehending in themselves, all the Words, Sentences, Gifts, Ordinances, or Precepts, that was required, and commanded the People of *Israel* by the Lord at that time; And therefore ought not to be limited by man, or distinguished into Morals, Judicials, and Ceremonials, as thereby to lessen the Authority of one, to set up another above it, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ; who saith, *He that shall break one of the least of the Commands, and teach men so, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 5.19. And it's written, *Deut.* 27.26. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Gal. 3.10. *And Christ came not only to fulfil*, this or that part of the Law, but the whole Law; yea, every *iote and tittle*, that then was written, *Mat.* 5.18. Neither is he said to be the end of this or that part (whether by men called Moral, Judicial, or Ceremonial; for the Spirit of the Lord hath made no such distinctions of the Law.) but of the Law in general, yea all that was written in the Law of *Moses*, in the *Prophets*, and in the *Psalms* concerning him, *Luke* 24.44. And as the Law was fulfilled, it was to pass away, or to be taken out of the way, the end being accomplished for which it was given: And being abolished, *Eph.* 2.15. abrogated and disanulled, *Heb.* 8.13. and taken away, or out of the way, *Heb.* 10.9. *Col.* 2.14. 2 *Cor.* 3.7, 11. The Law on Power of the endless Life, the Law of the Spirit and of Faith; which is not Moral, but Spiritual and Eternal, the new Covenant or Testament which is unchangeable, the Righteousness of God (without the Law in the letter) was and is manifested in the heart, to do thereafter, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, *Rom.* 3.21. *Jer.* 31.33. *Heb.* 8.10. according to the Promise of God; That so the blessing of *Abram* might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that they together with the Jews, to whom the Law in the letter was peculiarly given, might receive the Promise of the Spirit through Faith, *Gal.* 3.14. *Rom.* 4.16.

And whereas *A. S.* saith, *That Christ did not abolish the Judicial and Ceremonial Law, once commanded by God, because the one was peculiarly given to the Jews; and the other was temporary, expiring at Christs Death.*

Answ.

Anſw. If Chriſt did not aboliſh the Judicial nor Ceremonial Law, as they are called and diſtinguiſhed by *A. S.* Then it muſt needs follow, and be granted, That Chriſt did aboliſh, abrogate, diſanul, take away, or out of the way, the Law which *A. S.* calls Moral; or elſe Chriſt aboliſhed no Law at all: But it is evident from the plain teſtimony of the Scriptures of Truth before mentioned, *Eph.* 2. 15. *Heb.* 8. 13. & 10. 9. *Col.* 2. 14. 2 *Cor.* 3. 7, 11. That Jeſus Chriſt did aboliſh, abrogate, diſannul, take away, or out of the way, the Law of Commandments contained in the Law written, the old or firſt Covenant or Teſtament, the hand-writing of Ordinances, the Miniſtration of Death written with letters, and engraven in ſtones; And therefore, If Chriſt (as *A. S.* hath affirmed) did not aboliſh the Judicial and Ceremonial Laws; Then, as is before ſaid, it muſt of neceſſity follow and be concluded, That Chriſt Jeſus did aboliſh, abrogate, diſannul, take away, or out of the way that Law which *A. S.* calls Moral: For the Scriptures teſtimony in the places before mentioned, are either true or falſe. To ſay they are falſe, is blaſphemy; becauſe they were written by Divine Inſpiration, and the infallible guidance of the Spirit of Truth: And therefore being true; Then that Law (which *A. S.* calls Moral, of which he alſo affirmeth an Oath and Swearing to be a part, or required by) was by Chriſt aboliſhed, abrogated, diſannulled, taken away or out out of the way: And the Law by which Swearing was commanded being aboliſhed, All Oaths and Swearing commanded or required by that Law, muſt of neceſſity be aboliſhed with the Law. Now theſe things being ſo, All the Arguments and Diſtinctions, with all the Concluſions and clouds of Witneſſes that *A. S.* hath laid down, made and brought in, to prove the lawfulneſs of ſome Swearing now under the Goſpel, from the Authority of the Moral Law, as he calls it, are made void, and are become of none effect. And therefore *A. S.* is worthy of blame, in affirming ſo confidently, That if Swearing be enjoyned by the Moral Law, it muſt be of as much force now as ever: And it may be of concern to *A. S.* before he begin his Hiſtory of Oaths, that he find out ſome other Law of God, than that he calls Moral, to ground the lawfulneſs of Oaths upon, leſt he build upon a ſandy Foundation,

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and so labour in vain; For himself acknowledgeth (in pag. 303. of his *Reply* to *F. H.*) it was a certain truth, That Christ gave no new Command in matters of Oaths, nor in any other, more than what was formerly enjoyned in the Moral Law. And besides, in his *Epistle to the Reader*, he saith, *That no Orthodox man had ever said, That Oaths were ever any Gospel Ordinance*, (or to that effect.) but on the contrary their Tenent is, That they are commanded in the Moral Law; which Law being abolished (as before is proved) by Christ, and no other Law of God being found that requires Swearing under the Gospel; but on the contrary, a positive Law of Christ given to his Disciples, *Not to swear at all*; It cannot be of any service to the Lord, or his People, to write such a History: But rather to exhort People to mind the fear of the Lord, and to have a regard to all his Commands, which being in the Spirit, that helps the infirm, are not grievous; and to walk in the Light of the Lord, that they may have no occasion of stumbling at the Command of Christ, *Swear not at all*. For as it were a sin, to deny obedience to any Ordinance or Command of God in its time; even so it is a sin also, for any to use or practise any Command of God as a part of his worship & service, for any other end, or longer time, than it was given for, or ordained by God. Which Errour, Christians have justly condemned in the Jews, for holding up for Ordinances and Commands of God (Circumcision, Passeover, Temple, the seventh Day Sabbath, and many other things required and commanded by God in the Law, or first Testament, as Oaths and Swearing was under the first Testament commanded the Jews) after that Christ Jesus was ascended to his Father, and had sent the Spirit of Truth to lead his Disciples into all Truth; which Truth being the substance of all Oaths, Shadows, Types, Figures, and Signs, that were under the Law, which had but a shadow of the good things to come, *Heb.* 10. 1. Which when *David* in the Light of the Lord, had manifested to him (he being a Prophet) in which Light he saw Light, even the Law, whereof the Lord had said unto him, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, Psal. 2. 7. He then said (having seen the end of that which was to be abolished) that in burnt Offerings and Sacrifices the Lord took no delight, neither had pleasure therein;

therein; *Sacrifice and Offerings, thou wouldest not, but a body hast ordained me; in Offerings and Sin-Offerings thou hast no pleasure, Heb.* 10.5,6. So that although such as do not the Will of God, do not see the end of that which is abolished, neither know Christs Doctrine; yet all who do believe in him, whom God hath sent a Light into the World, they know the Doctrine of Christ, *Swear not at all*, to be of God, and according to godliness, *Joh.*7.16,17.

But to proceed to *A. S.* his second Argument, which runs thus;

Arg. 2.

Whatsoever at all times, as well under the Gospel as under the Law, tends in an especial manner to the glory of God, that is neither Ceremonial nor forbidden by Christ.

But some Swearing at all times as well under the Gospel, as under the Law, tends in a special manner to the glory of God.

And therefore all Swearing, is neither a Ceremonial Ordinance, nor forbidden by Christ.

Answ. God is not now, nor ever was glorified in an especial manner by his Creatures, but as they did and do obey his Commands, and so do the thing he requireth of them: As it's written, *Obedience is better than Sacrifice, and to do the will of God is better than the fat of Rams.* And although it be granted that some Swearing under the Law did tend to the glory of God, as done in obedience to his requiring; yet it doth not follow that now under the Gospel, any swearing doth tend in an especial manner to the glory of God; because the Law in or by which it was commanded, as before is proved, is abolished; and swearing now forbidden by Christ, *Mat.*5.34. to all his Disciples. And again, as hath been before proved, Swearing was never any essential part of the worship of God in Spirit and Truth, because it was not any part of the Law Eternal, neither in the beginning with God, nor originally of him; as the true witness-bearing was. And therefore swearing under the Gospel, not being required, but forbidden by Christ, without whom no man can glorifie God, doth not tend in an especial manner to the glory of God, as the true witness-bearing doth; so that this Argument, and the conclusion thereupon made, is of no force, to prove any swearing to tend in an especial manner

to the glory of God: But to do truth, confess the truth, and to speak the truth in witness-bearing, or in our communications, doth not only tend to the glory of God, but also to the benefit of our Neighbour; and is therefore acceptable unto God, and profitable unto Men.

And so I proceed to the third Argument, which is this,

Arg. 3.

If Christ forbad Swearing, Then it was either because it was repugnant to our duty to God, or repugnant to our duty to our Neighbour.

But some Swearing, is neither repugnant to our duty to God, (whose glory in sundry particulars it advanceth) nor repugnant to our duty to our Neighbour, to whom thereby much advantage may accrue in several respects.

And therefore Christ forbad not all Swearing.

Answ. This Argument is framed much like the question put to Christ, concerning the man that was blind from his birth; *Who did sin, this man or his Parents, that he was born blind?* To which question, Jesus answered, *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his Parents; but that the work of God might be made manifest.* So I may say, What if Christ forbad swearing, neither because it was repugnant to our duty to God, nor to our Neighbour; but that the Work, Power, and Will of God might be made manifest in and by Christ, and to make known unto his Disciples, *That all power in Heaven and Earth was committed unto him*, Mat. 28. 18. And that as he had power to take away, He had also power to give, alter, and change Laws, the Government being laid upon his shoulders, *Isa.* 9. 6. to whom also all Judgment was committed. But for further Answer, I say, whatever is acted by man as an essential part of the worship and service of God, which the Lord doth not require, is repugnant to our duty to God, and so hath the Lord testified in all ages, as appears *Gen.* 4. 5. *Isa.* 58. *Jer.* 14. 11, 12, 13. *Isa.* 1. 10, *&c. Mat.* 15. 8, 9. But swearing under the Gospel, the Lord hath not required, but forbidden, as before is proved: Therefore it is repugnant to our duty to God (whom we are to obey, and our superiours in him, and for him) and being repugnant to our duty to God, it cannot be truly advantagious to our Neighbour,

bour, whom we are to love as our ſelves. Again, there is nothing of advantage can accrue to our Neighbour by ſwearing, which true witneſs-bearing doth not fully ſupply where it is received: Nay, there is much more ſurety to our Neighbour by true witneſs-bearing (than by ſwearing) becauſe a true witneſs will not lye.

The fourth Argument is thus formed:

Arg. 4.

That interpretation of our Saviours words, Swear not at all, which renders the following words vain, and impertinent, is falſe &c.

Anſw. That Chriſt intended what he ſaid, I hope no Chriſtian will deny: And that thoſe words, *Swear not at all*, were ſpoken by Chriſt, and are in themſelves a prohibition of all ſwearing whatſoever, is evident: And that they were ſpoken by Chriſt (not by way of compliance with what had been ſaid before to them of old time) but in the contrary thereof, is apparent by the words; *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all:* Which words, if they ſignifie nothing but what was before ſaid, Then ſhould they not only be to no purpoſe, but hurtful, by making the caſe of ſwearing more dark and queſtionable than it was before under the Law: which for any man to affirm, were a great injury to Chriſt Jeſus, the Wiſdom of God; And therefore Chriſt having ſpoken all thoſe words, *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, &c.* And that in the contrary of what was ſaid before, as the word *but*, (and the words) *not at all*, do import: It is manifeſt that Chriſt did in that command, *Swear not at all*, forbid ſomewhat that was not forbidden by the Law: And conſequently, all ſwearing whatſoever, whether by the Lord, or by the Creatures; And that Chriſt added neither by Heaven, the Earth, Jeruſalem, the Head, they being the chiefeſt of the viſible Creatures, all the other creatures being the leſſer or inferiour are included, the greater comprehending the leſs; ſo that the words following, and precedent, are all ſignificant and uſeful: For being the words of Chriſt, not any of them are to be rejected; but all and every word eſtabliſhed: And therefore it were more beſeeming Chriſtians, to give all diligence to obſerve the Law, and Command of Chriſt; then to invent and frame Arguments againſt his words, which are in themſelves plain, and have no ambiguity in them; and being ſo according to the

rule, when in words there is no ambiguity, there no Expoſition is to be made againſt the words expreſſed: For in doubtful ſpeech we utter not a doubtful ſence, but only that which we mean; Therefore, he which ſpeaketh one thing, and meaneth another, neither doth he utter that which the word ſignifieth, becauſe he meaneth not ſo, neither that which he meaneth, becauſe he ſpeaketh it not: Which for any man to affirm of the words of Chriſt, *Swear not at all*, were, as before is ſaid, a great injury to Chriſt, the Wiſdom of God, and to the Spirit of Truth, from which the Scriptures of Truth were given forth. All which words of Chriſt being in themſelves prohibitions of Swearing, and no exceptions (as the words of Chriſt in the caſe of Divorcement were, where it's ſaid, *Except for the cauſe of Fornication*) do the more confirm and illuſtrate the extent of the Command. And being the words of Chriſt, the Wiſdom of God, they are neither vain nor impertinent, No more than thoſe words in the fourth Commandment, *In it thou ſhalt do no manner of work, nor thy Son, &c.* All which were included in thoſe general words before-going, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy:* Or the enumerating all thoſe words written in the Tables of Stone, which were all briefly comprehended in thoſe few words, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; And thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* And yet the Wiſdom of God, which is wiſer than men, knowing whereof we, as men, have need, ſpoke all thoſe words in the Law. And where the Law-giver hath made no exception, he to whom the Law is given ought not. And ſo I conclude, That the Law of Chriſt, *Swear not at all*, is perfect, and a full prohibition of all ſwearing unto his Diſciples; and being perfect, no man ought to add any thing thereunto, or diminiſh any thing from it. And ſo I proceed to the fifth Argument.

Arg. 5. *Nothing that of it ſelf is not intrinſically evil is forbidden by Chriſt (and that is proved by induction.)*
But Swearing is not of it ſelf intrinſically evil;
And therefore Chriſt did not forbid it.

Anſw. The thing in Diſpute is not, Whether Chriſt did ever forbid any thing that was not of it ſelf evil? But, whether Chriſt hath

hath forbidden all Swearing? Which that Christ hath forbidden all swearing, his own words (which are the interpreters of the heart) do prove. And one single testimony of the Scriptures of Truth, is of more strength than a thousand surmises, or meer humane witnesses. And therefore Swearing being forbidden by Christ, *Mat.*5.34. it is the duty of Christians to apply themselves to yield obedience to his Command, and not to frame Arguments to evade the same, or to ask a Reason wherefore he so did: And yet we read, That God commanded Circumcision and Sacrifices, which in themselves are not evil, and yet forbidden in the New Covenant: And we also read, That God forbad *Adam* to *eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*; which Tree and its Fruit of themselves, were not intrinsically evil. And the use of several other Creatures, under the Law, was forbidden the People of *Israel*. And what God the Father did forbid, it was by his Word; And Christ, the Word and Power of God, he forbad his Disciples to go into the way of the Gentiles, and not to enter into any of the Cities of the *Samaritans*, Mat.10.5. And he charged his Disciples *they should tell the Vision to no man, until, &c.* Mat.17.9. And that they should *call no man Master upon the Earth*, Mat.23.9. None of which of themselves were intrinsically evil. But that which concerns us as Christians, and so under the Law of Christ, is not so much to enquire, whether or no, such a thing be good in or of it self; But whether or no it be good for us to practise, yea or nay? For, as said the Apostle, *What is not of Faith is Sin:* And therefore, that is good for Christians to do, which the Lord requires of them. But to proceed to the sixth Argument; the force whereof is this:

Arg.6. *Either Christ forbad not the taking of an Oath upon just occasion: or else St.* Paul *(though assisted by the Holy Ghost) understood not the Text.*

Or, If he understood it, he acted against it, and that not rashly, but upon deliberation;

Because in his Epistle he calls God to witness, which is a formal Oath.

Answ. That the Apostle *Paul* did know the mind of Christ, in that Precept, *Swear not at all*, is believed: But that he acted contrary

contrary thereto, when he said, *God is my witness*, or called God to witness, is denied: For as he knew Christ had forbidden all swearing, he also knew that Christ was the true and faithful Witness, the first and the last, and came to restore the true witness-bearing as at the first (which was and is the Righteousness of the Law of Oaths:) And the Apostle being an able Minister of the Spirit, not of the Letter, he was come to see the End of that which was abolished, and preached the everlasting Gospel, the word of Faith, which was and is the Word of Truth, the Author of true witness-bearing, which was before any Oath or Swearing was. And so as Christ, his Lord and Master had done before, when he said unto *Pilate*, *For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth*, Joh. 18. 37. He in obedience to his Lord and Master, did bear witness to, and of the Truth: And in witness-bearing did (as the Servants of the Lord do) call God to witness, or appeal to the witness of God in men, concerning the truth of what he declared, without observing any set forms of words: And as *Sarai* had done before, when she said unto *Abram*, *The Lord judge betwixt thee and me*; yet did not swear at all.

But *A. S.* saith, *That calling God to witness, is a formal Oath; because there is an attestation of the Name of God.*

Answ. That the Name of God was used in witness-bearing, before any Oath or Swearing was, doth appear *Gen.* 3. 3. where *Eve* before the Fall, in witness-bearing, used the Name of God, when she said, *God hath said, Ye shall not eat, &c.* yet did not swear at all. And *Sarai* after the Fall did use an attestation of the Name of God in witness-bearing, when she said unto *Abram*, *The Lord judge betwixt thee and me*, Gen. 16. 5. and yet *Sarai* did not swear at all in so doing. And therefore the calling of God to witness, or saying, *God is my witness, &c.* without adding of somewhat more, is neither Oath nor Swearing. For if such attestations, or mentioning the Name of God, without somewhat more, were swearing, then it would follow, That People did swear oftentimes in their Prayers; As when they use that expression, *Oh God the Father of Heaven, &c. O God make haste to help us, Amen, Amen, &c.* which for any to affirm, were a great injury to the People. Again, If a bare attestation of the Name of God, by what terms soever expressed, were an Oath and Swearing, without adding of somewhat more,

more, Then would the Magiſtrates in Judicial proceedings in caſes where an Oath and Swearing is by the Law required, receive ſuch Atteſtations of the Name of God, without denying them for Oaths and Swearing. But ſuch Atteſtations, or the like, without adding ſomewhat more, is denied by the Magiſtrates in Judicial proceedings, &c. Therefore they are no formal or legal Oaths without addition of ſomewhat more; which ſomewhat more, being more than yea and nay, cometh of evil. For it muſt be confeſſed (and it is the chiefeſt ground, or cauſe, that is alleadged for the lawfulneſs of ſome ſwearing under the Goſpel, that it is neceſſary for the ending of Controverſies and Strife in Judicial proceedings, &c.) That if an Oath or Swearing were lawful in any caſe whatſoever, it muſt be in Judicial proceedings, &c. And I do not find in the Scriptures of Truth, That any Oath was lawful, but in ſuch proceedings, or the like emergent occaſions: All vain, and profane Oaths being forbidden by the Law: And as the lawful uſe of Oaths under the Law, was in legal or judicial proceedings; ſo the definition or determination of what was a legal Oath or Swearing, and what was neither Oath nor Swearing, was by the Law, and the Miniſters of it, and not by private or particular men: For at this day, there are ſeveral kinds or forms of Oaths required by the National Laws; And yet the bare Atteſtation of the Name of God, without addition of ſomewhat more, is not anſwerable to any of them, neither doth fully anſwer the requiring of the Law, as the daily practiſe of the Law in the Courts of Judicature doth manifeſt, which practice doth declare what a legal Oath is in the judgment of the National Laws: And for illegal Oaths, *A.S.* I hope will not contend. By which Laws alſo it doth appear, That the Law doth put a difference betwixt an Oath or Swearing, and Witneſs-bearing; and doth not confound them together, as many men do. As for inſtance in one particular, When a Party, or a Witneſs doth appear to anſwer a Libel, or to give Evidence in the Eccleſiaſtical Courts; upon his Appearance in the Court, he is required to take his Oath; and then the Book being held, the Party having laid his hand thereupon; ſome words being ſpoken to him by the Judge of the Court, and after the Party having kiſſed the Book, then is the Party ſaid to be Sworn, or to have taken his Oath. And being ſo Sworn, he

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is admoniſhed to give in his Anſwer, or his Evidence, as the Caſe is, at or before ſuch a time; ſo that the Evidence after given into the Court, is the Witneſs-bearing (and not the Oath): which Evidence, or Anſwer (as the Caſe requires) if he neglect or refuſe to give, he is proceeded againſt for refuſing to give his Evidence, or Anſwer: And not as one that refuſeth to Swear or take an Oath, he having Sworn or taken his Oath before; which Evidence, if given, is the Witneſs-bearing, and not the Oath. For if he refuſe to ſwear, he is proceeded againſt for refuſing to ſwear, although he offer to give his Evidence without ſwearing. So that the Evidence is the witneſs-bearing, and not the Oath; By which it doth appear, That an Oath is in, and of it ſelf, a diſtinct thing from Witneſs-bearing (which was before any Oaths was) and is but a Bond or Tye for true Witneſs-bearing, and not the ſubſtance: For when the Evidence is given, if what is Evidenced be falſe, the Oath taken before or after, doth not make it true; And if it be truth that is Evidenced, the refuſing to take or add an Oath, or give a Token, Sign, or Pledge, doth not detract any thing from it. By which it may appear to the unprejudiced in mind, That the laying aſide of an Oath and Swearing (which was added for a time under the Law in witneſs-bearing, becauſe men had tranſgreſſed or gone from the Truth of God, which was in the beginning, before any Oath was) in witneſs-bearing, is not to deſtroy true witneſs-bearing, but the reducing it to its primitive purity, as it was in the beginning. So that the true Witneſs, Chriſt Jeſus, being made manifeſt, all that believe in him and receive him, to them he gives power to become the Sons of God; and by his Spirit (which is Truth, and leads into all Truth) he enableth them, to do the Truth, confeſs the Truth, and ſpeak the Truth from the heart unto their Neighbour, or before a Magiſtrate in witneſs-bearing; as it's written, *A good man, out of the good treaſure in his heart, he bringeth forth good things.* So that our Neighbour, if he receive our Teſtimony, being Truth, he is not dammified by us; although we may not Swear at all, or give him any outward ſign, or pledge, which cannot add any thing in Truth to the Truth which we are willing and free to bear Witneſs of, and unto, upon any juſt occaſion; Neither can the Magiſtrate be more aſſured of the Truth of what is Evidenced, by an Oath, than by a

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bare Affirmation: For as the one, ſo the other may be true or falſe: Again, I ſay, That not only our Neighbour is not prejudiced by us (becauſe we may not add any ſign, token, or pledge, to the Truth which we bear witneſs of and to) but he is by true witneſs-bearing more advantaged, than he is or can be by Swearing (when the Evidence born is not true) which neither is, nor ever was of the eſſence of true witneſs-bearing; Becauſe true witneſs-bearing was before any Oath or Swearing was: For there may be and hath been many times Oaths and Swearing in Judicial Proceedings, when the Evidence given upon ſuch Oaths have not been true, but falſe; and ſo men thereby have and do ſuffer prejudice. But when and where true witneſs is born and received, although an Oath be denied, or not given; yet hereby men are advantaged and receive benefit, and no prejudice at all; for where a true Teſtimony is born, there none ever did or can thereby receive loſs. Again, Chriſt Jeſus being come to reſtore and eſtabliſh everlaſting Righteouſneſs in the new Covenant that is faultleſs, and ſo unchangable; And Oaths and Swearing not being faultleſs, and ſo changable; not being from everlaſting, but added for a time, becauſe of tranſgreſſion, as is beforeſaid: It was expedient that all Swearing, with thoſe things under the firſt Covenant, ſhould be taken away, that were things in themſelves changable, and might be ſhaken; to the end, that true witneſs-bearing which could not be ſhaken, might be eſtabliſhed in the Houſe of God for ever. So that although, where *Moſes* or the Old Teſtament is read, an Oath and Swearing, as a Vail, remains to this day undone away; yet nevertheleſs, all whoſe hearts and minds are turned to the Lord, in the Light that was before any Vail or Oath was, they ſee and witneſs the End of that which is aboliſhed: for, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, 2 *Cor.* 3. And therefore the Apoſtle *Paul* (having ſeen and witneſſed the removing of thoſe things which might be ſhaken, and knowing that when that which was perfect was come, that which was but in part was to be done away) he in witneſs-bearing ſaid, *God is my witneſs, I ſpeak the Truth in Chriſt, I lye not, &c.* without adding any outward token, ſign, or pledge; or obſerving any form of words at all: So that as he himſelf ſaid, *He became as without*

Law, to them that were without Law, 1 Cor. 9. 21. yet was he subject to the Law of Christ, and did not *Swear at all*. And as he did not himself swear, so neither did he teach swearing to be lawful by way of Doctrine to the Hebrews, when he said, That an Oath is among them for an end of all strife and controversie, *Heb.* 6. 16. which words he spoke, not by way of Doctrine, as a thing to be practised by them as Christians; but by way of repeating, what formerly had been used amongst the Jews, under the first Covenant, and so that he might shew unto them being Jews, how that by Christ, the first Testament was taken away, or out of the way: and the second established upon better promises: For as he said of Swearing, he also said of the Priesthood, That *every High Priest is* (not was) *ordained to offer, &c.* Heb. 8 3. *And that after the second Vail, was the Tabernacle, which is* (not was) *called the Holiest of all*, Heb. 9. 3. *And when Moses had spoken every Precept to the People according to the Law, he took the blood of Calves, saying, This is* (not was) *the blood of the Testament which God hath appointed to you*, Heb. 9. 19, 20. All which his sayings do plainly shew, That what he had in those particulars mentioned, was by way of repeating what had been in use under the first Covenant; and not by way of Doctrine, what they were to practise then as Christians. But I proceed to the seventh Argument, which as *A. S.* saith in brief runs thus;

Arg. 7. *Some Swearing is enjoyned, in the third Commandment, every Precept prohibitive of vice, being necessarily so to be expounded, as implying the contrary duty; or else it is impossible to free the Decalogue from imperfection.*

And consequently, Thou shalt not take the Name of God in vain, *implies, Thou shalt take the Name of God* (that is) *Thou shalt Swear when there is a just occasion.*

And therefore Christ who came not to destroy the Law, did not forbid all Swearing.

Answ. What is impossible with man, is possible with God; and that Christ did fulfil (not destroy) the Law, is confessed: And having fulfilled the Law, the end for which it was for a time given,

given, was accompliſhed; which being accompliſhed according to the Will of God, was aboliſhed, abrogated, diſannulled, and taken away by Chriſt, as before is fully proved. Now, as ſaid the Apoſtle, *Rom.7.3,4. The Woman which is in ſubjection to her Husband, is bound by his Law to him as long as he liveth; but if her Husband be dead, ſhe is delivered from his Law: So then, if while the man liveth ſhe take another Husband, ſhe ſhall be called an Adultreſs; but if the man be dead, ſhe is free from the Law, ſo that ſhe is no Adultreſs though ſhe take another Husband. Wherefore, my Brethren, ye alſo are become dead by the Body of Chriſt, that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit to God.* What words more plain to prove, That Chriſtians in Chriſt Jeſus, are freed from the Law of the carnal Commandment, that they may ſerve God in newneſs of the Spirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter, *Heb.7.10. Rom.7.6.* And though it be true that Chriſt came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil it; yet that doth no more prove *A. S's* Concluſion inferred thereupon, *viz. Therefore Chriſt did not forbid all ſwearing, becauſe ſome ſwearing was commanded in the Law*; Then it doth, where a man is ingaged by his Bond to pay ſo much money upon ſuch a day; and the man upon that day doth make payment of the money according to his Bond; That the man in ſo doing doth deſtroy his Bond, or that it is after Obligatory to him, when he hath fulfilled it. For although the People of *Iſrael*, to whom the Law was given by God, could not be freed therefrom until it was fulfilled; yet notwithſtanding when it was fulfilled, it was by the Ordination of God to paſs away, and the People freed from it, as before is proved. So that when Chriſt Jeſus had fulfilled the Law (not for himſelf) but for them that were under it, *He Redeemed them that were under the Law, and ſo delivered them from the Law*, Rom.7.6. Gal.4.5. *that they*, together with the Gentiles, that never were under the Law of the firſt Covenant, *might receive* in Chriſt *the adoption of ſons*. Again, That the Law was perfect (although it were denied that any ſwearing was enjoyn'd in the third Commandment) is witneſſed, yea every Word of God is perfect; becauſe in the Law was fully contained ſo much of the Will and mind of God, as he was pleaſed to make known at that time unto

his People *Israel*, and as he did require obedience unto, from them; (secret things belongs unto God, and things revealed to us and our Children) no man being capable of knowing the whole Will and Mind of God. And yet, what man doth know of the Mind of God, by the manifestation of his Spirit, is perfect; because every measure of the Will of God, as every Word of God, is perfect: And the Law of God being perfect, therefore nothing is by man to be added thereto, or taken therefrom. Insomuch, as when *the Israelitish Womans Son blasphemed the Name of God, and cursed*; and there being at that time no positive punishment appointed by God in that case; he was put in hold, until the Lord himself shewed unto *Moses* what punishment was to be inflicted upon him, *Levit.* 24, 11, 12, 13. So that *Moses*, who was a Prophet, did not take upon him to give any extensive interpretation to the Law (which being Penal to the transgressors, was not to be supplied by man, by way of implication or intendment) neither to say of it, That the Law before given by God was imperfect, because the whole Mind of God was not therein revealed, concerning all things that after might fall out by reason of Man's wickedness: Neither had the Lord, as *A. S.* would infer, limitted himself to what before was written, but that he might and did, as he himself thought good, further add to what before was written, or take away from the same (and that without any mutability in his Will) although he had forbidden *Moses* so to do. And besides, the Name of God was, and may be used with reverence and godly fear, many other wayes than by Swearing; And therefore this Argument fails in proof with the other. But to proceed to the eight Argument, *viz.*

Arg. 8. *That Christ never did any thing without reason.*
But there was no reason why he should absolutely forbid Swearing.
And therefore he did not so forbid it.

Answ. That man should require a reason wherefore the Lord doth forbid or command him to do, or not to do such a thing: or that God should give unto man a reason for what he doth, *Job.* 9. 12. *Rom.* 9. 20. is more than right reason doth require: But that man should obey what God commandeth him without asking a reason wherefore, is reasonable and according to right reason. It being

being the Lord hath made us, and not we our ſelves. And it being aſſerted by *A. S. That Chriſt never did any thing without reaſon.* And proved, that Chriſt did ſay unto his Diſciples, *Mat. 5. 34. Swear not at all.* Therefore it ought to be granted, That Chriſt in forbidding all Swearing, did it not without reaſon: For if Chiſt Jeſus in that Command did not forbid all Swearing whatſoever, Then it would follow, That men under the Goſpel might have liberty not only to ſwear by the Creatures; but alſo if they ſhould ſwear by the Name of God, and not perform, they ſhould go unpuniſhed; becauſe *where there is no Law, there is no tranſgreſſion.* For the Law in which an Oath in ſome caſes was commanded; and forſwearing, vain and prophane ſwearing by God and the Creatures, forbidden; being aboliſhed and taken away by Chriſt, as before is proved: Unleſs Chriſt Jeſus had forbidden all ſwearing whatſoever, by a Command that changeth not, men would have thought themſelves at liberty, not only to Swear by the true God, and not perform; but alſo to Swear by the Creatures, and that without any ſin. And indeed it may juſtly be feared, That ſuch pleading as hath of late been by ſome, for the lawfulneſs of ſome ſwearing, and ſuch interpretations of Chriſts words as have been made, thereby to prove ſome ſwearing lawful, and that from thoſe words of Chriſt, *Mat. 5. 34, &c.* hath encouraged ſome men in theſe dayes to ſuch a height of ſwearing, as they are now come: And therefore Chriſt Jeſus, the Wiſdom of God, in giving forth that Command as a prohibition of all ſwearing, did it not without reaſon: And what is before ſaid, may be a good reaſon wherefore Chriſt added thoſe words, *Neither by Heaven, &c.* after he had ſaid, *Swear not at all.* And ſo the words following, are neither vain nor impertinent. For under the Law they were to Swear by the Name of the Lord, and not by the Creatures: And by the Law they were required to perform their Oaths unto the Lord, which they ſwore by his Name, leſt they ſhould forſwear themſelves; which Chriſt having before repeated in ſubſtance, By way of oppoſition of, and not in compliance with, ſaid, *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all; neither by Heaven, &c.* So that the words truly conſidered, are thus in effect; *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all by the Name of the Lord, as heretofore*

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under the Law you were commanded; neither by Heaven, &c. according to the erronious Doctrine of the Scribes and Phariſees. For if Chriſt had not intended abſolutely to forbid all manner of Swearing; Then he by that Command, *Swear not at all*, had made the caſe of Swearing more doubtful and queſtionable than it was before; which to affirm, were a great injury to Chriſt, the Wiſdom of God, whom God ſent into the World, to give ſight to the blind, and to guide their feet into the way of peace. Again, Chriſt Jeſus being the Mediator of the new Covenant, which perfecteth for ever thoſe that are ſanctified, (which being given upon better promiſes than the firſt Covenant which made nothing perfect) was unchangable. It was therefore according to right reaſon, That the firſt Covenant, with all thoſe things under it, that were changable and ſo might be ſhaken (as being things that were not in the beginning with God, as an Oath and Swearing was not in the beginning with God, neither originally of him, and therefore might be ſhaken) ſhould be aboliſhed and taken out of the way; To the end, that nothing that was changable, or in which there was a remembrance again of ſin, might remain in the new Covenant which is unchangable. And ſo when that which was perfect was come, then that which was in part was aboliſhed, 1 *Cor.* 13. 10. For Chriſt being come, the true and faithful Witneſs, the firſt and the laſt, *Rev.* 1. he reſtored, or the true witneſs-bearing was reſtored in him, to all that believe, which is perfect; which being ſo, it was according to right reaſon, that an Oath and Swearing, which was but in part, ſhould be done away; for true witneſs-bearing, though without an Oath, never did prejudice to any, as Oaths and Swearing have done, when the witneſs born before or after, hath been falſe, as daily experience doth teſtifie. And what if ſome now, as heretofore, believe not the Command of Chriſt, ſhall their unbelief make the Faith of God of none effect? God forbid. For ſeeing that true ſaying is as much or more than ſwearing; and that Chriſt hath ſaid, *That for every idle word men ſhall give an account in the day of Judgment:* And *that the Lyar, as well as the falſe Swearer, ſhall be ſhut out of the Kingdom of God:* Therefore every one that feareth the Lord (for thereafter as a man feareth, is Gods diſpleaſure) is as much bound

by

by his Word, as by an Oath: and there being no more ſecurity to the Magiſtrate by an Oath, than by true ſaying, or witneſs-bearing, neither benefit to our Neighbour: Therefore, if the ſame outward puniſhment were inflicted upon the Liar, as falſe Swearer, the difference in a ſhort time would not be great; becauſe experience doth evidence, That he that makes no conſcience of his words, will not matter to Swear falſly for Conſcience ſake to God. And it may be believed, That one reaſon why ſtrife doth ſo much in theſe dayes abound amongſt men (notwithſtanding that Oaths and Swearing abound) is, becauſe that the true witneſs-bearing, as it was before ſwearing was, is not received in Judicial proceedings for want of an Oath and Swearing. Again, To ſay That Chriſt did forbid all Swearing, becauſe his Father would have it ſo; is a better reaſon than any *A.S.* hath produced to the contrary. But to proceed to *A.S.* his ninth Argument, *viz.*

Arg. 9. *That our Saviour gave no new Moral Command: And conſequently did not prohibit that Swearing, which long before had been Commanded by God.*

Anſw. The queſtion in diſpute is not, Whether Chriſt the Mediator of the new Covenant, did give any new Moral Command; But, Whether he forbad all Swearing to his Diſciples? which that he did, his own words, *Mat.*5.34. *Swear not at all*, do prove. As for the word *Moral*, it is a word of Art, invented by the wiſdom which is from below, which is not ſubject to the Law of God: For it's evident, That the Penmen of the Scriptures, did never make uſe of that word *Moral*, when they writ and declared the Teſtimony of God. And therefore the Apoſtles Caveat in ſuch things is uſeful, *Col.*2.8. *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through Philoſophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt.* For the Law of the new Covenant in Chriſt Jeſus is Spiritual and Eternal (not Moral) and according to the Promiſe of God, *Jer.*31.33. *Heb.*8.10. the commands thereof are by the Lord according to his Promiſe, put into the mind, and written in the heart of man; *written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God; not in tables of ſtone,*

but

but in fleshy tables of the heart, 2 Cor. 3. 3. And therefore is called, *the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*, Rom. 8. 2. and *the Law of Faith*, Rom. 3. 27. (and not Moral) by way of excellency above the Law of the letter, as the Scriptures do declare, 2 *Cor.* 3. And Christ said unto his Disciples, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*, Joh. 14. 15. And when he commanded them to *go and teach all Nations, &c.* They were to *teach them to observe* (not the Law of *Moses*) but *all things whatsoever* he had *Commanded them*, *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. And in *Joh.* 14. 26. He told them, The *Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father would send in his Name, he should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them.* And *Joh.* 16. 12, 13. Christ told them, *He had yet many things to say unto them, but they could not then bear them: Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth, &c.* So that Christ did not send them to the Law called Moral (for to be their guide) written in tables of stone; but promised *to send the Spirit of Truth to guide them into all Truth, and to shew them things to come.* So that although Christians do, and are to practise and observe many of those things which were commanded in the Law, as being originally of God, of which the Law had a shadow, but not the substance, *Heb.* 10. 1. yet they do not observe them, because they find them to have been Commanded in the Law of *Moses*, but as they are Commands of Christ in the new Covenant, written in the heart, and put into the mind by the Spirit of the Lord, that quickneth and giveth Life and power to do thereafter, *Heb.* 8. 10. *Rom.* 10. 8. For *now the Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed both by the Law and the Prophets; Even the Righteousness of God, which is by the Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe*, *Rom.* 3. 21, 22. But the Law is not of Faith, neither ever was any Oath or Swearing of the Law of Faith, as true witness-bearing was and is: So that by the works of the Law which is not of Faith, no man is or can be Justified; but by Faith without the deeds of the Law, a man is Justified according to *Rom.* 3. 28. & 3. 20. And now those things which were commanded in the Law, which were Eternal, as the Love of God, &c. was Eternal (not Moral) of which the Law engraven in stone had a shadow, although they

continue

continue under the Gospel; yet as was said, They are not the works of the Law which made nothing perfect, but the fruits of the Spirit, *Gal.* 5.22,23. and therefore are perfect; as Love, Joy, Peace, long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance; against such there is no Law: But against Swearing there is a Law, as before is proved. So that which was impossible to the Law, in regard of the weakness of the flesh to do, God sending his Son for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, *That the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the Flesh but after the Spirit, the law and power of an endless life.* For, as before is said, Swearing was never any part of the Law Eternal or of Faith, therefore the taking of it away was no addition to, or substraction from the Law Eternal, or of Faith. And although the Lord had limitted *Moses*, and in him all others from adding unto, and taking from what was then written in the Law; yet he had not limited himself to what he had then given in command to *Israel* (not to the Gentiles) and but for a time, *until the Seed should come*, Gal. 3.19. and so was temporary. And it being acknowledged by *A.S.* that Oaths are no Gospel Ordinance; and before proved that Christ did abolish, abrogate, disannul, and take away the Law; yea, that Law which *A.S.* calls Moral, in which, as he saith, Oaths are commanded. Therefore *A.S.* is blameworthy in asserting Swearing as an everlasting Statute to be observed by all that obey the Lord and his Christ; and in so doing he is found in the steps of those in the Apostles dayes, who taught, That it was needful to Circumcise such as believed in Christ, and to command them to keep the Law of *Moses*; insomuch as the Apostles and Elders came together to consider of the matter; and after consideration had, declared, That it seemed good to the holy Ghost, and to them, to lay upon them, which from among the Gentiles were turned to God, no greater burden than those necessary things, *viz. That they should abstain from meats offered to Idols, and from blood, from things strangled, and from Fornication.* But I proceed to *A. S.* his tenth Argument, or Reason, as he calls it; which was,

Arg 10. *That the High Priest charged Christ our Saviour to swear, and he accordingly Answered upon Oath; and that some years after he had said, Swear not at all.*

Whence it follows;

That the lawful Magistrate may impose Oaths, and the People upon whom they are imposed, may and ought by Christs Example, to Answer upon Oath, notwithstanding the seeming prohibition, Swear not at all.

Answ. That it was some years after that Christ said to his Disciples, *Swear not at all*: That the High Priest did use that expression, unto Christ, *I adjure thee, &c.* is believed: But that Christ Jesus (the true and faithful witness, who came into the World to bear witness of the Truth, and to establish the true witness-bearing, as it was before swearing was) when he said unto the High Priest, *Thou hast said*; did in so saying Swear or Answer upon Oath, is denied: Neither hath *A. S.* proved that Christ did swear, otherwise then by his, and other mens conjectures and conceivings: All of which being Swearers, are not in this case competent Witnesses. And that he saith, That the High Priest adjured Christ, and Christ answering, *Thou hast said* (without more saying) *did Swear by the Living God, not expressed indeed by him, but by the High Priest.* *Answ.* But how doth *A. S.* know that Christ before his Answer to the High Priest, did not deny swearing or to swear, (for it's written *Joh.* 21. 25. *That there were many things which Jesus did, which if they should be written every one, &c.*) And therefore to conclude, because it is not mentioned by the Apostle, that Christ did not deny to swear, therefore Christ did swear: This is to weak a surmise to warrant swearing, when Christ had before commanded his Disciples, *Not to swear at all.* For, if to answer by way of affirming or denying that which is asked by a Magistrate, were an Oath and Swearing, because the Magistrate doth require the Party to Swear, without addition of somewhat more: Then surely many have suffered in these late years, as refusers to take an Oath and to Swear, when they did Swear. But my belief is, That the Magistrates by whom such have been fined

and

and imprisoned, or otherwise censured for refusing to Swear or take an Oath; and better know what a legal Oath is, than *A. S.* doth in this particular, are of another judgment or opinion than *A. S.* is; or else it may be hoped, that none hereafter shall suffer upon that account of refusing to Swear, when they are willing to Answer, and do Answer to such questions as they shall be asked or examined of by the Court, or particular Magistrate. And therefore *A. S.*'s Conclusion is denied, failing in the proof of his premisses. But to proceed to his eleventh Argument, or Reason, *viz.*

Arg. 11.

That no Exposition of this Text, or any other, was to be admitted that put an inconsistence betwixt the Old Testament and the New.

But that Exposition, Swear not at all, *renders it a total prohibition of all Swearing, does so; for it makes it contradict several Texts in the Old Testament.*

And therefore is not to be admitted.

Answ. The Law of Christ is Penal to the transgressors of it, *Heb.* 2. 2, 3. & 12. 25. and therefore doth not admit of any supply to be made by man, who is and ought to observe the Command without exception of persons, and not to frame Arguments against it; and the Lord hath forbidden man to add any thing, or diminish from what is written. For the Law of God, and of Christ, being perfect; therefore nothing ought to be added to it. Therefore to admit of any Exposition of the Scripture, whereby to make them contradictory one to another, or any Text of Scripture contradictory in it self, were a great evil: And therefore all commodious Interpretations (as they are called) of that Text, *Mat.* 5. 34. *But I say unto you, Swear not at all, &c.* inducing the lawfulness of Swearing in some cases, is denied, as being contradictory to what is written: For if such Expositions were received for Truths, Then would an able Orator with his School-Distinctions, and Syllogisms, make the same thing seem either likely, or unlikely, according to his fancy. And in the end, do as the Scribes and Pharisees did, make void the Law of God with their Traditions and subtil Distinctions: but we have not so learned

med of Christ, who are taught of him, the Truth as it is in him, unto which nothing is to be added, nor any thing taken therefrom. And where it is said by *A.S. That that Exposition of that Scripture, Swear not at all, that renders it a total prohibition of Swearing, does put an inconsistency betwixt the Old Testament and the New.* I *Answer* and do say, It doth no more so, than those Texts which *A.S.* and others of his judgment do own, for the change of the Seventh-day Sabbath, unto the First day of the Week; nor than the Apostle did, 1 *Cor.*7.19. where he said, *Circumcision is nothing:* and *Gal.*5.2. *If any man be circumcised, Christ Jesus shall profit him nothing:* nor then Christ Jesus himself did, *Mat.*5.43, 44. when he said, *It hath been said of old time, thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you.* Besides several other Texts of Scriptures that might be mentioned in the New Testament to that purpose: So that although there hath been diversities of Dispensations, and diversities of Administrations and Commands, as there are diversities of Gifts and Operations, yet the same Spirit, and the same Lord, Law-giver, Judge, and King; who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in the old time to our Fathers by the Prophets, and hath spoken to us in these last dayes by his Son, and Commanded that all should hear him, and honour him, to whom he hath committed all Judgment, who saith, *Sweay not at all:* So that, if Times and Dispensations were rightly discerned and distinguished, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament do agree, for there is no contrariety in the Spirit that gave them forth; but the contrariety is in that mind that is carnal, and therefore is not subject to the Law of Christ, according to *Rom.* 8,7. But all who mind the things of the Spirit, they do the Will of God, and so know Christs Doctrine to be his that sent him, when he said, *Swear not at all.* And that there was a time when God was purely worshipped, and truly served, before any Oath was; And that there was a time when *Israel* was commanded *to fear the Lord, and serve him, and swear by his Name*; by which it is evident, That swearing was no essential part of the Worship of God in Spirit and Truth, and therefore was but temporary: And that there was a time when *Israel* was to seek the place which the Lord should chuse, to put his Name there, *viz. Jerusalem*; and

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thither they were to come, and bring their burnt Offerings, *Deut.* 12.5,6,7. *Joh.*4.20. And there was and is a time, *that neither in the Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, they should worship the Father, Joh.* 4. 21. And there was a time, that the condition *of the Heir should not differ from a Servant, &c.* And there was an appointed time when *he should be Lord of all, and receive the adoption of a Son, Gal.*4.1. to 6. But the Well is deep, and whilst People have or at the least make use of nothing to draw the Water with, but what they have and receive from man, by man, and of man, they will receive little refreshment or satisfaction in these things before-mentioned. Nevertheless, *when they in their hearts shall turn to the Lord, the Vail shall be done away; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Light, and it is the Light that God hath commanded to shine in mens hearts, for to give unto them the knowledge of the things that are of his Spirit, which the Natural man understands not, nor can the Wisdom which is from below find out.* And now I come to *A.S.* his twelfth Argument, or last Reason, which was and is;

Arg. 12.

The general practise of Christendom who could not all be so ignorant as to misunderstand the meaning of those words, Swear not at all; *Or so wicked as not only rashly but advisedly to act against them.*

Answ. It is written, *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do evil.* And also, *That when King Herod heard that the Holy Child Jesus was born, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him; and gathering together all the Chief Priests and Scribes of the People, he asked of them, Where Christ should be born? And they said at Bethlem, &c.* Mat.2. 1, &c. And yet the Chief Priests and Elders of the People, were so wicked, that they assembled together, and consulted how they *might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him,* Mat. 26. 3, 4. concerning whom the Apostle, *Acts* 3.17. bore witness, *That they did what they did unto him ignorantly, because they knew him not*; and therefore exhorted them to repentance. So that it may be possible, That all those in Christendom, mentioned by *A. S.* to own swearing, as men might in this case of swearing be ignorant (the time of ignorance being winked at) And therefore this Reason given by *A.S.* to prove that Christ did not forbid all swearing, when he had said, *Swear not at all*; is neither sound nor satisfactory, especially the

Scriptures

Scriptures following well considered, *Joh.*5.34,36. & 8.43. *Mat.* 11.25. to which many others might be added: And yet my belief is, That the Lord in no Age hath left himself without witness concerning the truth and extent of the Command of Christ aforesaid, although born by Babes and poor Fishermen, or other persons unlearned in the many languages; and therefore little esteemed of the world (though highly esteemed of God) but by the world hated, and their testimony rejected as erronious: And yet greater was he that was in them, than he that was in the World, and so they had the greater witness: for if the witness of men be great, the witness of God is greater, which every one that believeth hath in himself, 1 *Joh.*5.9,10. And he that keepeth the commands of Christ, he dwelleth in Christ and Christ in him, according to 1 *Joh.* 3.23,24. And I also believe concerning many of them who have affirmed as their judgment, *the lawfulness of some swearing under the Gospel*, That if they had lived in these our dayes, wherein the Lord God out of the riches of his Love, and the abundance of his Light, which he hath commanded to shine out of darkness (after the long night of Apostacy) in the hearts of the heirs of his Righteousness, for to give unto them the knowledge of his Glory, and of the true witness-bearing in the face of Jesus Christ, as it was before any Oath or Swearing was; that they would have come to have seen, and also to have acknowledged (as many in these dayes (blessed be the Name of the Lord for his unspeakable gift) have done their mistakes in the case of swearing, and by confessing their sins, and acknowledging their mistakes, have given glory to the Lord, and conformed their judgments & practises to the command of Christ, *Swear not at all*: And with *Solomon* have born their testimony, That in making many Books there is no end; and in reading of them, much wearisomness to the flesh; And that the end of all, is to learn *to fear the Lord and keep his Commandments, which is the whole duty of man*, Eccles.12.12,13. And now having born my testimony for the Lord concerning Oaths and Swearing, according to that in my Conscience, and the Scriptures of Truth; and that not in a way of opposing the Son of God against his Father, nor the Scriptures of the New Testament against the Old, nor by making any Text of Scripture contradictory in it self: But in and by such a way as they are established in unity one with another; Neither with

with a contending or oppoſing ſpirit, againſt any Law or Ordinance of man, that ought to be ſubmitted unto for the Lords ſake; But in the ſpirit of love and meekneſs, for the clearing my Conſcience, before the Lord and his People, in yielding a Reaſon wherefore I, and ſome others may not take any Oath or Swear at all; although we ſhould be required thereunto by a lawful Magiſtrate, I have peace; chuſing rather in this caſe to fall into the hands of men, and by ſubmiſſion unto their puniſhment (which hitherto, bleſſed be God, I and ſome others have found, not according to the rigour of the Law, but with ſome moderation) thereby teſtifying my practice to be according to my judgment, againſt all reſiſtance of the powers which God hath ſet over me; and that not for fear of wrath, but for Conſcience ſake to God, who is able not only to deſtroy my body, but to caſt both ſoul and body into Hell fire: Aſſuredly beleeving, that whileſt I have a reſpect unto all the Commands of Chriſt Jeſus, I ſhall never be aſhamed. And if in this matter concerning Swearing, any ſhould yet remain otherwiſe minded, and ſeem to be contentious about words and forms; I ſay, we have no ſuch cuſtome in the Churches of Chriſt. For, where glory is given to God on high, there is peace on Earth, and good will to all men on Earth below; And all who wait in the Light of God, as it ſhineth in their hearts, they in due time ſhall have the ſame Truth revealed unto them, of which I have herein born my Teſtimony; And I, and others, are to walk in that whereunto we, through the Grace of God are come, That ſo we may not be aſhamed of our Teſtimony for the Lord, though born through much ſuffering.

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